



# THE PHANTOM



Mike Bullock  
Silvestre Szilassy

LEONARDI & JUSKIN  
BPI

# THE PHANTOM

created by LEE FALK

**"CHECKMATE"**  
PART FOUR OF FIVE

WRITTEN BY **MIKE BULLOCK**

ILLUSTRATED BY **SILVESTRE SZILAGYI**

COLORED BY **BOB PEDROZA**

LETTERED BY **NATE PRIDE**

EDITED BY **JOE GENTILE**

COVER BY **RICK LEONARDI AND TERRY AUSTIN**

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT  
**ED RHOADES**

AND TO **KAREN MOY** AT KING FEATURES

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MAWITAAN,  
CAPITAL CITY  
OF BANGALLA.



YEEAAH!

RAAAH!

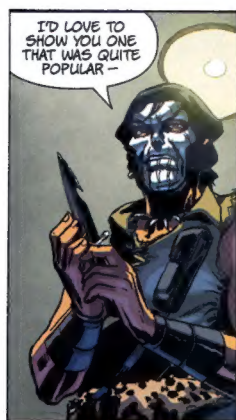
GET 'EM!

WEEE-OOO  
WEEE-OOO

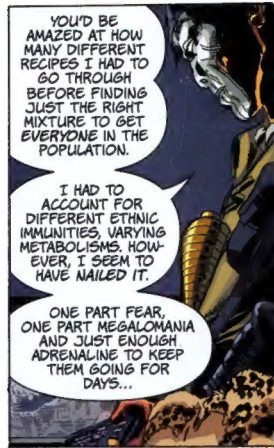
COME ON,  
IT'S ALL  
OURS!

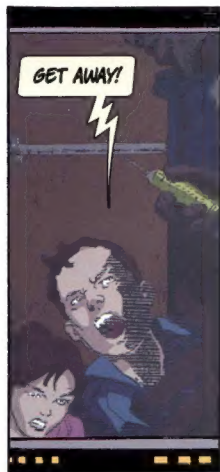
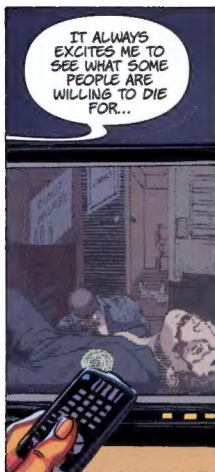
IT LOOKS  
LIKE HELL  
HAS COME TO  
MAWITAAN.



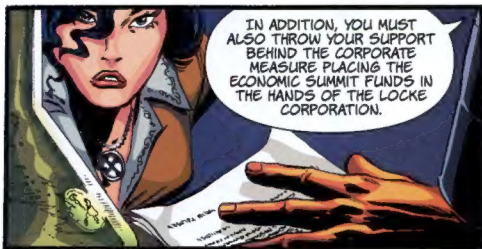






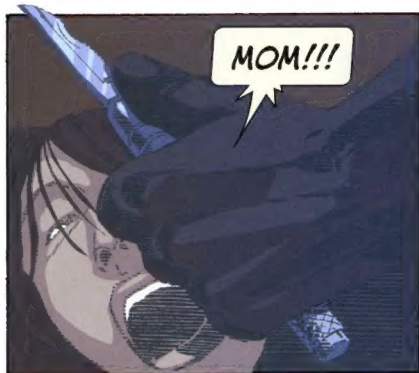


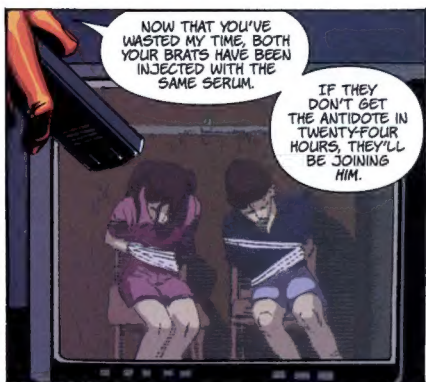




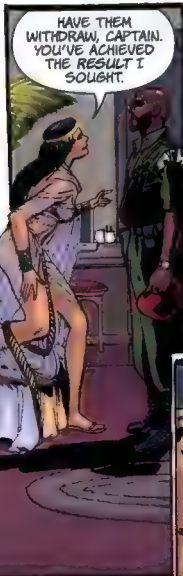
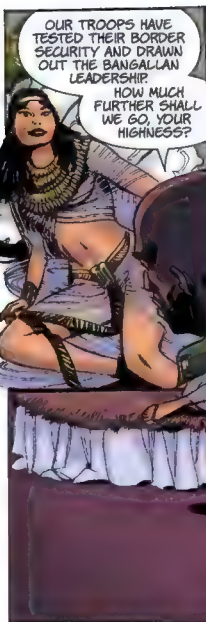
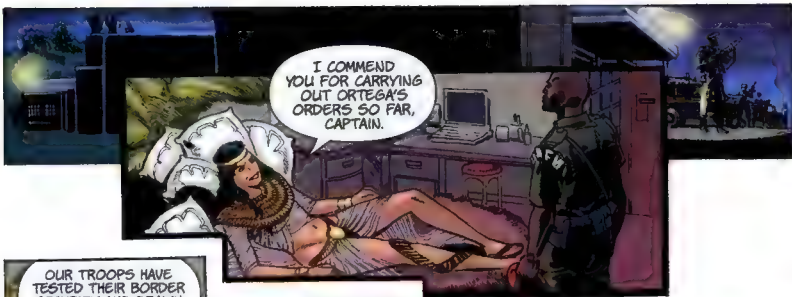
\*SEE PHANTOM #119 - GHOST WHO EDITS.

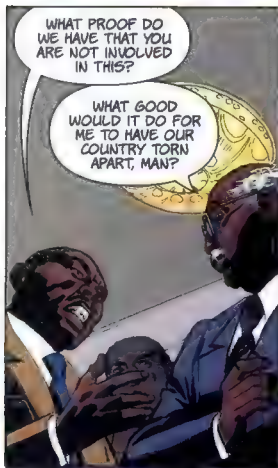
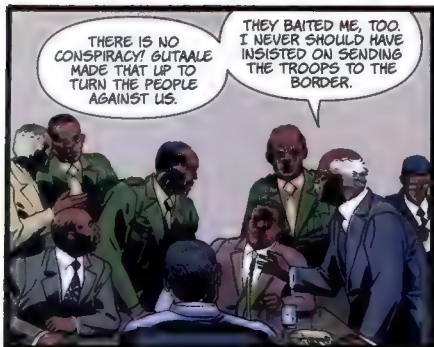




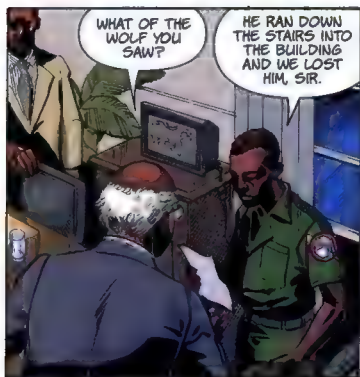
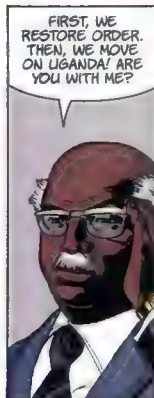
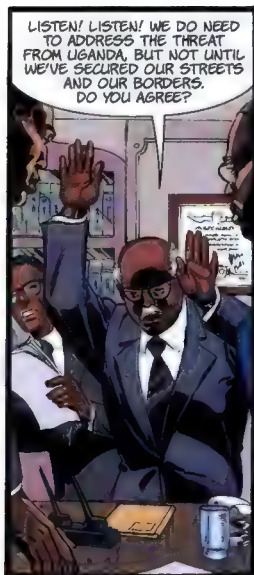


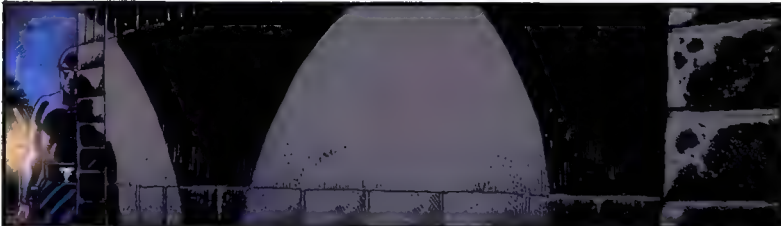
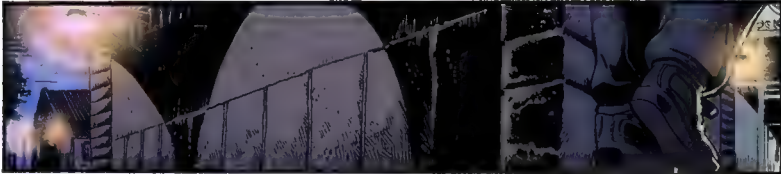
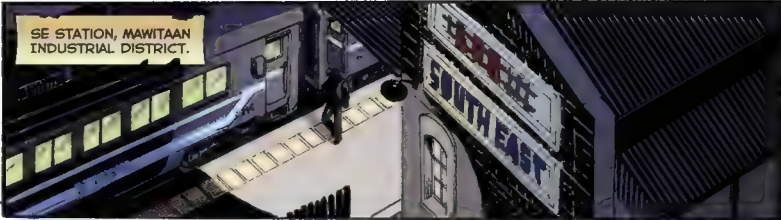












BANGALLA-UGANDA  
BORDER CROSSING.

WELCOME  
TO  
BANGALLA

THIMP!

STOP

THEWMP!

YOU ARE  
CLEAR,  
CAPTAIN!

UAFM

VRRMMM

IT IS AS YOU  
WISH, MIGHTY  
ALI!

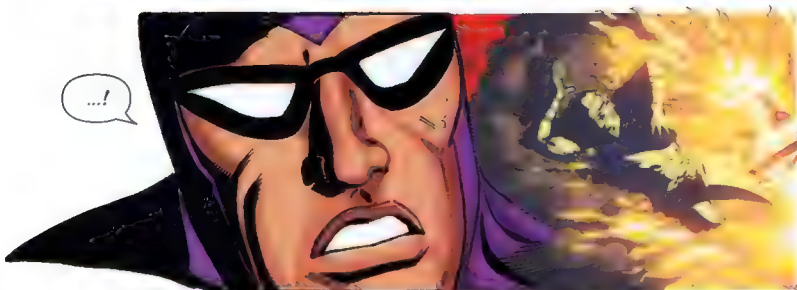
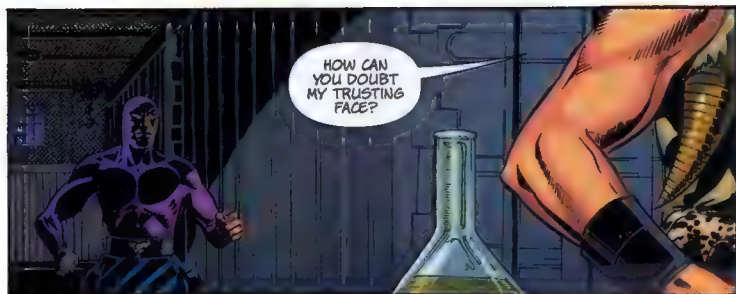
FINALLY,  
BANGALLA IS  
OURS.

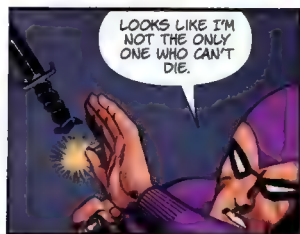




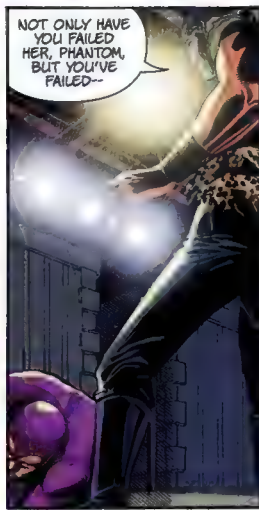
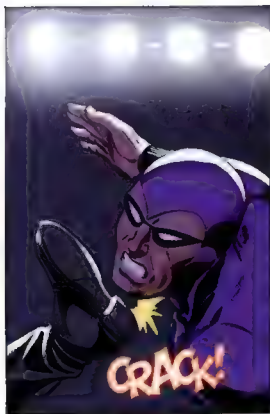
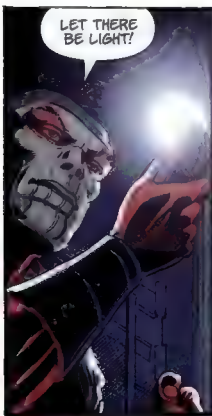
HOW WILL YOU LOOK BACK ON THIS?

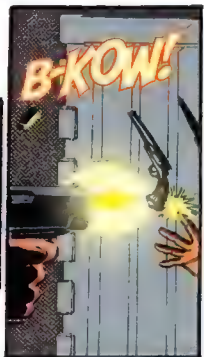
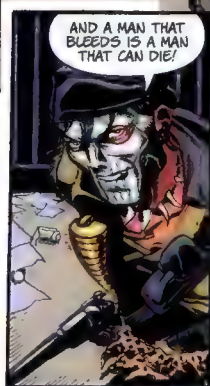


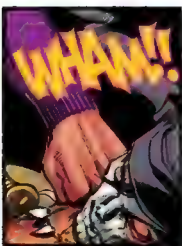




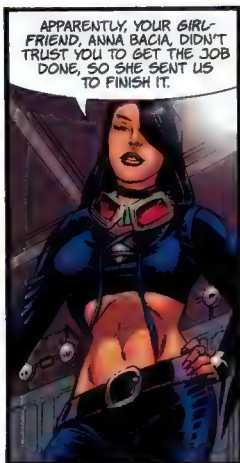


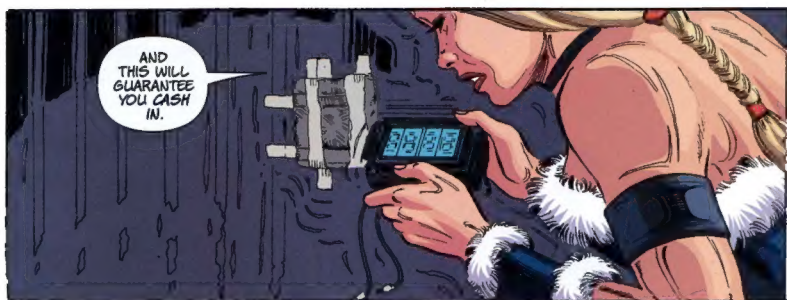














GIVE US FIVE MINUTES TO GET AIRBORNE, ZOPHIA.



THAT LAST BURST OF JUICE I GAVE HIM SHOULD KEEP HIS NERVOUS SYSTEM SCRAMBLED FOR ANOTHER TWENTY MINUTES OR SO.



PERFECT.

BYE-BYE, "DADDY".



WHAT DID YOU CALL HIM?

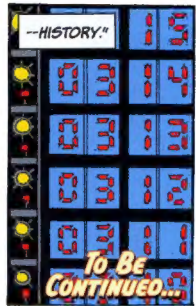


THAT'S RIGHT—

DADDY WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW YOUR BRATS AREN'T HIS ONLY CHILDREN NOW, WOULD HE? MIGHT BREAK UP THAT PERFECT LITTLE MARRIAGE YOU HAVE.



"BUT IN ANOTHER FEW MINUTES, ALL THAT WILL BE—



To Be CONTINUED...



# BEHIND THE MASK

By *Ed Rhoades*

## The Wedding of The Phantom

The Phantom wed Diana in 1977 in the 136th daily story and in the 104th Sunday story. It was a controversial move. About the same time Lee Falk married Elizabeth. The Phantom married Diana. Lee told me, 'I was getting married, and I thought it was time for The Phantom to get married, too.' The story has been reprinted several times in hardback and paperback in South America and in Australia.

As far back as the 1950's, Phantom artist, Wilson McCoy received fan letters requesting the marriage. They didn't realize it was the decision of the writer not the illustrator, but the long courtship created tensions. The Phantom once proposed to Diana early on, but at the time, she was confined to a wheelchair and felt unworthy of the role of the wife of The Ghost Who Walks. Then there were so many obstacles to their union, including a considerable one... Diana's mother who wanted more for her daughter than a home in the jungle. She was always trying to get Diana romantically involved with young men she considered good catches, but with unsuccessful results. She did, however, manage to thwart the efforts of The Phantom to get together on several occasions.

What if the Phantom died without a son to take over the mantle? As the years went by, Curan and the jungle folk who were in on the secret of his 'immortality' did everything they could to insure there would be an heir to the skull throne trying to set him up with other ladies and encouraging him to propose. One problem was The Phantom held Diana in such high esteem, he was afraid to ask her to live in the jungle.

In Lee's stories, there were so many other women who wanted him, but he always remained faithful to his one true love since school days.

Some considered it a risky move for Lee to end the tension and finally have them marry, but considering all the untold stories of the previous Phantoms, Lee still had plenty of opportunities for romance in the strips and he took advantage of that from time to time.

In another very popular newspaper strip, Dagwood was a young rich playboy dating a flapper, but it didn't resonate with readers as much as when he married Blondie and was disinherited by his wealthy father. Now he was working with a difficult boss, having kids and a normal home, the strip found more popularity than ever. Perhaps, Lee saw that as an example of a way to bring the Phantom strip to more mainstream audiences.

It certainly caused a stir on a global level. In New Zealand, Parliament took time for a mock debate on whether Diana should remain in the Skullcave as a traditional Phantom wife or not. When a popular established strip changes conventions that have endured for more than 40 years, the results are newsworthy. The actual story was an artistic collaboration between the legendary Sy Barry and his talented assistant, André LeBlanc. It was handled with taste and grace. When Lee learned of André's participation, he asked me to relate to André how much he liked the work on the wedding story. It was even accompanied by a limited edition King Features Wedding poster signed by Lee and Sy.



The wedding created an environment for some interesting story lines including Moonstone's work by Ben Raab and this exciting arc by Mike Bullock's with the twins seemingly left motherless.

# A GREEN GIANT SCAN



*LIKE IT?  
BUY IT!*